

A STUDY ON THE GENDER AND AGE DIFFERENCES IN THE USAGE OF MOBILE PHONE AND INTERNET

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ABSTRACT

Mobile phones have changed the life of people considerably, as it enables one to communicate any time and from any place. With the help of mobile phones such spheres as business trade began to function more effectively and productively. The development of mobile phones made the world busier, because the streets are full of people talking over the telephone and hurrying somewhere. The Internet is a vital part of the education process; resources for learning and educating are implemented into lesson plans and homework every day. Students and teachers can access unlimited amounts of information to broaden their education. With Internet access in colleges, there is almost no limit to what students can learn. Hyderabad from the state of Andhra Pradesh was purposefully chosen as the locale for the study. There was no significant difference found between age and gender with respect to usage of mobile phone and internet in a day. In the age group of 18-19 years there is no significant difference between boys and girls further there is a significant difference between 20-21 years usage of mobile phone in a day. There was no significant difference between age and gender both the age groups 18-21 years usage of the internet in a day. There was less difference in the age range of the sample because the entire 200 hundred students fell in the age range of 18-21 years hence, the entire sample had a similar usage pattern with respect to mobile phone and internet.

KEYWORDS: *Mobile Phones, Internet, Hyderabad & Students*

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INTRODUCTION

A mobile phone also known as a cellular phone, cell phone and a hand phone is a device which can make and receive telephone calls over a radio link while moving around a wide geographic area. It does so by connecting to a cellular network provided by a mobile network operator. The calls are to and from the public telephone network which includes other mobiles and fixed-line phones across the world.

The mobile phone has also become an easy way to initiate and explore relationships with the opposite sex. It provides the adolescent girl the opportunity to flirt while still feeling secure and in control and in the process she is also able to avoid the build-up of emotional energy that is often generated from contact in face-to-face situations (J. G. Howcroft, personal communication, October 27, 2010).

Junco, Merson and Salter (2010) findings on gender differences in the use of mobile phone revealed that females spent more time talking on the mobile phones than men. Females were also more likely than men to make and receive more family oriented as well as social-oriented calls. In addition, females consistently displayed higher levels of attachment to their cell phones.

Deviset *al.*, (2009) studies also show gender related differences among young users of mobile phone. They concluded that boys spend more time on using mobile phones than girls do. Also, adolescents consume more time on using mobile phones on weekends than on casual week days. It reflects that various factors contribute towards the extent of mobile phone usage.

Zulkefly and Baharudin (2009) found that age of the students also played a factor in determining patterns of using the mobile phone. Younger students were found to be more inclined to use the additional features of the mobile phone, such as MMS and GPRS, while older users preferred to use the conventional voice calls. The features of the mobile phone would make some students easily more attracted and obsessed with the mobile phone. Females used more of the SMS feature while boys were more interested with other technological features of the mobile.

Croccoet *al.*, (2008) reported that past research has typically focused on the demographics of Internet users, the number of Internet users and the host sites. Furthermore, previous studies mainly focused on quantitative research that describes the distribution attributes related to Internet usage pattern. It fails to describe the experiences especially by women who use the Internet services compared to men.

The Details of the Results of the Comparison between Boys and Girls and the Age Differences

Table 1: Usage of Mobile Phone in a Day by Boys and Girls

Age (Years)	Boys (Mean)	Girls (Mean)	t -value	p-value
18	4.00	3.68	0.6544	0.5159 NS
19	3.92	3.96	0.0741	0.9412 NS
20	3.96	3.36	1.2854	0.2048 NS
21	4.24	3.52	1.5078	0.1381 NS

NS: Non Significant when $P > 0.05$

In the age groups of 18, 19, 20 and 21 years all the p values are more than 0.05. Hence, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to the usage of mobile phone in a day.

Table 2: Usage of Internet in a Day by Boys and Girls

Age (Years)	Boys (Mean)	Girls (Mean)	t -value	p-value
18	7.60	5.76	1.8901	0.064 NS
19	6.28	5.80	0.4687	0.6413 NS
20	5.96	6.28	0.4020	0.6893 NS
21	6.92	6.16	0.8725	0.3872 NS

NS: Non Significant when $P > 0.05$

With reference to the usage of internet in the age groups of 18, 19, 20 and 21 years all the p values are more than 0.05, so there is no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to the usage of internet in a day.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Sample on usage of Mobile Phone in a Day

Age group (Years)	Boys (Mean)	Girls (Mean)	t -value	p-value
18-19	3.96	3.82	0.3878	0.6990 NS
20-21	4.10	3.44	1.9924	0.0490 *

* Significant at 5% level when $p < 0.05$

Two sample t-tests was applied to test the difference between boys and girls of age group 18-19 and 20-21 years with respect to the scores obtained for the usage of mobile phone in a day. There is no significant difference between boys

and girls in the age group of 18-19 years. Further there is a significant difference between boys and girls in the age group of 20-21 years as the p values are less than 0.05.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Sample on usage of Internet in a Day

Age group (Years)	Boys (Mean)	Girls (Mean)	t -value	p-value
18-19	6.94	5.78	1.6442	0.103 NS
20-21	6.44	6.22	0.3741	0.7090 NS

NS: Non Significant when $P > 0.05$

Two sample t-tests was applied to test the difference between boys and girls of age group of 18-19 and 20-21 years with respect to the scores obtained for the usage of internet in a day. The p values obtained were presented in the above table that all the p values were more than 0.05 which indicates that all are not significant at 5% level. Hence it can be conclude that there is no significant difference observed between boys and girls in the two age groups with respect to the usage of internet in a day.

The reasons for the above results could be explained to the factors that there was less difference in the age range of the sample because the entire 200 hundred students fell in the age range of 18-21 years hence the entire sample had a similar usage pattern with respect to mobile phone and internet.

The reasons for no significant difference between the genders could be explained to the factors that mobile phone and internet are powerful communication devices which erased the gender differences with regard to usage as well as perceptions on mobile phone and internet. It can be concluded that the sample did not show any difference with regard to usage and perceptions.

CONCLUSIONS

From the study it was concluded that boys from both the age groups were spending more than 2 hours with mobile phone for talking, whereas girls were spending much time in texting the messages. The younger boys were using the internet through mobiles for more than two hours and girls of the same age was using internet on the phone only for 1 to 2 hours.

Adolescents preferred to spend much time on online at home compared to college and have at least 2 social networking websites. Facebook was very popular among graduate college students irrespective of the gender and age group.

Results indicated that adolescents were using mobile phones in college and perceived that the mobile phone is useful to keep contact with friends and family. Thirty two percent of boys and girls reported that they never shut down their mobile phone and the only reason for shutting down the mobile phones was during exams.

Both the age groups perceived that communication was the best thing and radiation was the worst thing in using mobile phones. Eighty two percent of the students said that the internet is responsible for many of the good things e. g. Enjoyment. Both the age groups reported that information gathering was the best thing and becoming addicted was the worst thing about the internet.

There was no significant difference found between age and gender with respect to usage of mobile phone and internet in a day. The reasons for no significant difference between the genders could be explained to the factors that there was less difference in the age range of the sample because the entire 200 hundred students fell in the age range of 18-21

years.

Another reason could be that mobile phone and internet are powerful communication devices which erased the gender differences with regard to usage as well as perceptions on mobile phone and internet. It can be concluded that the sample did not show any difference with regard to usage and perceptions.

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